

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 DODE-00 SS-15 MC-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00

IGA-02 AID-05 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PRS-01 USIE-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00 EB-07 /060 W

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O 211715Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2742

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARAMARIBO 0637

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, NS

SUBJ: PRESS ALLEGATIONS ON SURINAM ELIGIBILITY FOR FMS

REF : STATE 178972

SUMMARY: ATTENTION TO SURINAM'S FMS STATUS AND CHARGES THAT US IS ARMING SURINAM DISAPPEARED FROM PRESS AS RAPIDLY AS THEY APPEARED AND THERE IS NO NEED AT THIS MOMENT FOR FURTHER COMMENT BY USG OR GOS. IN LONGER RANGE GOS NEEDS TO BE PREPARED TO COUNTER SUCH CHARGES ITSELF, BUT THIS IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT FMS STATUS MAY HAVE BEEN ACCORDED SURINAM WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH OR APPLICATION BY THE LATTER. END SUMMARY.

1. STORIES ABOUT FMS DETERMINATION, WITH SLANT TOWARDS IDEA THAT US WAS "ARMING" SURINAM, WERE CARRIED IN WEEKEND JULY 17-18 PAPERS, AS REPORTED PARAMARIBO 0633. IN RESPONSE TO STRONG REQUEST FOR SOME REACTION FROM EMBASSY, EMBASSY MADE ORAL STATEMENT OVER TELEPHONE TO LOCAL RADIO STATION ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: " IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR, PRESEIDENT FORD SIGNED A ROUTINE DETERMINATION THAT INCLUDED SURINAM, AS A NEWLY INDEPENDENT COUNTRY, ON THE LIST OF THOSE COUNTRIES ABLE TO PURCHASE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES IN THE UNITED STATES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR NORMAL SALES PROCEDURES. THIS WAS NO SECRET, AND WAS PUBLISHED AT THAT TIME IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFICIAL REGISTER IN WASHINGTON. ALMOST ALL COUNTRIES IN

NORTH, CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA ARE ON THIS LIST, AS WELL AS MANY OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD. THERE WAS NO REASON TO EXCLUDE SURINAM FROM THE TREATMENT ACCORDED THESE COUNTRIES, NOW THAT IT HAD BECOME INDEPENDENT." THIS STATEMENT WAS COORDINATED INFORMALLY WITH DIRECTOR OF MINISTRY OF GENERAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER ATTENTION TO THE MATTER IN THE SURINAM PRESS. HALF A DOZEN OR SO KNOWLEDGEABLE AND INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE HAVE QUERIED US INDIVIDUALLY ABOUT THE STORIES, AND WE HAVE GIVEN THEM ALL STRAIGHTFORWARD ACCOUNT THAT FMS ELEGIBILITY WAS ESTABLISHED SIMPLY TO REGULARIZE TRANSFER OF MINOR AMOUNT OF MATERIEL FROM DUTCH. WE DO NOT THINK ANY FURTHER STATEMENT WOULD BE ADVISABLE AT THIS TIME, AS IT WOULD ONLY STIR UP ATTENTION AGAIN, BUT WE AGREE THAT WE SHOULD SEEK TO HAVE GOS PREPARED ON ITS PART IF THE MATTER SHOULD AGAIN ATTRACT PUBLIC INTEREST.

3. IN THIS LATTER CONNECTION, HOWEVER, WE ARE UNABLE TO TRACE IN EMBASSY FILES ANY INDICATION THAT GOS WAS EVER CONSULTED ABOUT FMS STATUS OR THAT IT ASKED FOR OR AGREED TO RECEIVE SUCH STATUS. THERE IS NO KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICER NOW AT THIS POST WHO WAS HERE DURING THE PERIOD IN QUESTION. STATE 139083 (JUNE 13, 1975) STATES THAT DEPT WOULD START PROCESSING PAPERS FOR SURINAM'S FMS ELEGIBILITY BEFORE INDEPENDENCE ON BASIS OF CURRENT SURINAMESE INTEREST, BASED ON USCINCEUR 141637Z NOV 74, WHICH SAID ONLY THAT "SURINAMESE ARMY" WAS INTERESTED IN EQUIPMENT DUTCH WANTED TO LEAVE BEHIND. STATE 139083 SAYS FURTHER THAT ITS ACTION "IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT, UPON ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE, SURINAM WILL CONFIRM THIS INTEREST." PARAMARIBO 0346, JULY 24, 1975, REPLIED GIVING RATIONALE FOR FMS STATUS AND RECOMMENDED THAT GON BE ASKED TO APPRISE GOS THAT USG PERMISSION WAA NEEDED TO TRANSFER MATERIEL, BUT NO MENTION WAS MADE OF INFORMING GOS ABOUT FMS STATUS. THE HAGUE 5044, OCT 3, 1975, REPORTED THAT GON HAD AGREED TO STEPS OUTLINED IN STATE 139083, BUT AGAIN NO MENTION WAS MADE THAT GOS HAD BEEN TOLD ANYTHING ABOUT NECESSITY FOR ATTAINING FMS STATUS AS PREREQUISITE TO OBTAINING TITLE TO MATERIEL.

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4. STATE 093408, APRIL 17, 1976 WHICH ANNOUNCED SIGNATURE BY THE PRESIDENT OF FMS DETERMINATION FOR SURINAM, AUTHORIZED EMBASSY PARAMARIBO TO INFORM APPROPRIATE GOS OFFICIALS THAT SURINAM WAS NOW INCLUDED IN THE FMS LIST FOR CASH SALES. THIS CABLE REFERENCES STATE 139083 AND THE HAGUE 5044, BUT NO OTHER MESSAGE IN BETWEEN NOR ANY OTHER COMMUNICATION THAT WOULD EVIDENCE THAT THE GOS HAD BEEN INFORMED THAT FMS STATUS WAS BEING SOUGHT FOR IT OR THAT THE GOS HAD, AFTER INDEPENDENCE,

CONFIRMED ITS INTEREST IN OBTAINING MILITARY EQUIPMENT BY THE FMS ROUTE. ON THE CONTRARY, WHEN WE INFORMED GOS OFFICIALS ABOUT THEIR HAVING ATTAINED FMS LIST STATUS, THE REACTION WAS TO ASK WHAT FMS MEANT, WHICH LED TO SEVERAL EXCHANGES OF MESSAGES BETWEEN THIS EMBASSY, THE DEPARTMENT AND USCINCSO, CULMINATING IN THE VIIT HERE LAST MWEK OF TWO FMS-CONCERNED OFFICERS FROM PANAMA TO EXPLAIN THE WHOLE MATTER OF FMS TOTHE SURINAMESE.

5. UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT FINDS SOME OTHER INDICATION IN ITS FILES THAT THE GOS WAS EVER CONSULTED ABOUT FMS STATUS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THIS DID NOT TAKE PLACE. AS IT MAY APPEAR TO THE GOS, THEREFORE, THE PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION SIGNED APRIL 14 WAS A UNILATERAL ACT OF GRACE BY THE USG, PERMITTING THE REGULARIZING, THEY ARE TOLD, OF THE TURNOVER OF A SMALL AMOUNT OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT LEFT BY THE DUTCH BUT ALSO MAKING SURINAM ELIGIBLE FOR FUTURE PURCHASES FROM THE US IF IT SO DESIRES, UNDER FMS PROCEDURES.

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ACTION ARA-10

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IGA-02 AID-05 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PRS-01 USIE-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00 EB-07 /060 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2743

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PARAMARIBO 0637

6. IN THIS SITUATION, WE THINK IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT GOS OFFICIALS WILL WANT TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES PUBLICLY TO THE REASONS FOR MAKING SURINAM ELIGIBLE FOR FMS, AS THEY DO NOT CONSIDER THAT THEY HAD ANY HAND IN THIS PROCESS. MOREOVER, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, THE NEWS STORIES IN QUESTION ALL ORIGINATED OUTSIDE OF SURINAM AND MADGAWXD ABOUT THE USG, NOT THE GOS, AND THE GOS WILL NOT WANT TO ADD TO ITS OTHER PROBLEMS BY REPLYING TO THOSE

ALLEGATIONS, WHICH WOULD MOST LIKELY LEAD TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GOS ROLE IN THE FMS ELIGIBILITY PROCESS, WHICH WOULD HAVE TO ANSWERED TO THE EFFECT THAT THE GOS DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THAT PROCESS UNTIL IT HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED, SOMETHING THAT WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRESTIGE OF THE GOS INTERNALLY OR EXTERNALLY.

7. NEVERTHELESS, WE AGREE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PREPARE THE GOS FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO MAKE SOME PUBLIC COMMENT ON THESE CHARGES (AND IT MAY ALSO CHOOSE TO MAKE SOME PRIVATE FEMARCHE TO GUYANA IF THE SUBJECT URGES BETWEEN THEM). THE ONLY MAN WITH WHOM THIS CAN BE DONE IS PRIME MINISTER ARRON, WHO KEEPS ALL SUCH DECISIONS TO HIMSELF. AMBASSADOR WILL ASK TO SEE ARRON, BUT FEELS IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE REPLY TO PARAMARIBO 0612 BEFORE DOING SO IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE ENTIRE BACKGROUND, IF THAT IS DEPARTMENT'S DECISION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY SALES, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARAMA00637
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760281-0107
From: PARAMARIBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760737/aaaabfxz.tel
Line Count: 193
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 178972
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAY 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <27 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS ALLEGATIONS ON SURINAM ELIGIBILITY FOR FMS
TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, MASS, NS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006